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September 7, 2007

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W. *Marvin Southard (RK)*
Director of Mental Health

SUBJECT: **PROGRAM CHANGES AT AUGUSTUS F. HAWKINS URGENT COMMUNITY CARE**

The closure of the Department of Health Services (DHS) Martin Luther King (MLK) hospital and emergency services is a significant loss for the South Los Angeles community. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is dedicated to doing everything possible to meet the extraordinary needs of this community. As part of this effort the DMH Augustus F. Hawkins (AFH) Urgent Community Care (UCC) program will work collaboratively with the DHS MLK-Harbor Urgent Care Center to provide coordinated care for individuals with both physical and mental health needs. The MLK-Harbor Urgent Care Center hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to midnight, and will be mirrored by the hours of the AFH UCC, enabling the two UCCs to work hand-in-hand to care for clients that require the services of both programs. Psychiatric urgent care services previously offered 24/7, were implemented in order to relieve the overcrowding of the former MLK Psychiatric Emergency Services, but cannot operate independent of 24/7 medical services and accordingly, have been discontinued. In addition, the AFH UCC no longer meets the State Department of Mental Health Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) designation requirements due to the loss of the MLK emergency and hospital resources. Therefore, effective September 10, 2007, DMH is withdrawing the UCC's LPS designation.

Among the mental health clients who formerly went to the psychiatric emergency room for medications and other non life-threatening issues, a significant proportion suffered from co-occurring substance abuse disorders. With limited availability of emergency services and the increase in police actions to clear the homeless from the skid row area, these individuals are increasingly over-burdening shelters where the expertise necessary to respond to the level of psychiatric acuity has become a growing concern. As part of the AFH UCC program, DMH is immediately implementing a specialized network of services focused on the needs of individuals with co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. The UCC will feature a unique "outside the walls"

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approach, going into shelters to reach the hundreds of men and women housed there every night, and now experiencing mental health crises.

The AFH UCC will continue to provide basic crisis services, including assessment, brief treatment, referral and linkage to ongoing services at AFH or with appropriate providers in the community.

As indicated above, DMH will work closely with DHS and other community agencies to ensure that resources are made available to meet the critical needs in this community.

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c: Health Deputies
Chief Executive Office
County Counsel

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